



## 2. Purpose and Need

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This chapter explains the need for the Presidio Trails and Bikeways Master Plan and describes its purpose, goals, and objectives.

### ***Project Purpose***

The project will establish a comprehensive trails and bikeways network in the Presidio to effectively address the agencies' mandates for land and resource management, and to reflect the input received from the public and other agencies.

### ***Project Need***

The Presidio is a national park used and enjoyed by the public for its open spaces, vistas, scenery, opportunities for active recreation and exercise, and for its contemplative settings. The majority of Presidio trails evolved over time. The Trails Plan is needed to establish a well-functioning network of trails and bikeways, and to enhance the public's exploration and experience of the Presidio's open spaces and resources. The plan is also needed to improve connections between key features of the Presidio, increase accessibility, enhance visitor safety and encourage use of alternative modes of transportation.

Under existing conditions, visitors and park users often find some Presidio trails and bikeways challenging and difficult to navigate. Trails and bikeways can be confusing or inconsistent, and can be the cause of environmental degradation. In certain areas, the trails are causing erosion, fragmenting native plant communities and wildlife habitat, disrupting natural seeps and drainage, degrading views, and damaging historic coastal fortifications.

There are approximately 30.5 km (19 mi) of existing designated pedestrian and multi-use trails and bike lanes in the Presidio. There are many miles of additional unofficial trails and shortcuts that have been developed through informal use. These "social trails" criss-cross much of the Presidio, including natural areas and sensitive habitats. About 14.5 km (9 mi) of social trails have been mapped.

The GMPA directs NPS to identify pedestrian and bicycle route improvements that support the Presidio's recreational, natural, cultural, and historic resource goals. The PTMP states that the Trust will improve pedestrian and bicycle routes in Area B to promote convenient, safe and enjoyable walking and bicycling. The Trails Plan is needed to provide trails and bikeways design guidelines, and identify unofficial trails that should either be closed or incorporated into the official trails network. The plan is also needed to address the significant increase in users during the last decade.

## Goals

Working together, the NPS and the Trust have developed goals for creating a safe and enjoyable Presidio trails and bikeways network. These goals are consistent with both the GMPA and the PTMP. The public scoping process helped further refine the goals and objectives. The five principal goals are:

- 1) Enhance public use, access and experience
- 2) Support resource preservation
- 3) Contribute to a comprehensive transportation strategy
- 4) Provide for sustainable design and construction
- 5) Promote ongoing public involvement through volunteer stewardship



Walkers Enjoy a Trail in the Historic Forest

### Enhance Public Use, Access and Experience

The first goal of the Trails Plan is to accommodate a variety of recreational and educational activities, including walking, running, cycling on a road or trail, rollerblading, dog walking, natural and cultural

history exploration and quiet contemplation. A cohesive, clear network of trails and bikeways should provide a variety of route choices and challenges, as well as make desired connections throughout the Presidio for visitors, residents and tenants. Routes should travel through the Presidio's varied landscapes, including forests, coastal areas and the bayshore, and along historic buildings, batteries and other features. Accessible trails should be included where feasible. Access to views should be improved. Landscape buffer zones should be provided where trails travel along roadways to improve user experience. The public's experience should also be enhanced with information, services, shuttle stops and, in some cases, automobile parking at trailheads. Trail classifications and design guidelines should provide consistent guidance for meeting the needs of diverse users.

User safety is an important component of the visitor experience at the Presidio. Where feasible, separating pedestrian trails and multi-use trails from vehicular traffic lanes will improve the visitor experience. Bike lanes along vehicular roads will be clearly marked. Signs will alert motorists to the presence of bicyclists and pedestrians.

The following objectives support the goal of enhancing visitor use, access and experience:

- Provide a variety of trail experiences to meet diverse user needs ranging from contemplative solo activities to active group recreation
- Provide diverse interpretive and educational experiences
- Create consistent, well-made and sustainable trails
- Improve bikeways to minimize the potential for conflicts between pedestrians, bicyclists and cars
- Promote safety and security on trails and roads and at intersections
- Enhance the accessibility of trails, and provide supporting facilities
- Improve access to views of outstanding natural and cultural features

## **Support Resource Preservation**

The resource preservation goal of the Trails Plan is focused on preserving the valuable natural and cultural resources that make the Presidio an outstanding national park. Resource management objectives of both agencies include protecting sensitive plant and animal species, preserving unique cultural resources (including historic earthworks, batteries, buildings and archeologic resources), and protecting unique cultural landscapes. The plan proposes trail realignments, improved management and maintenance of trails, and specialized trails (such as permeable paving and boardwalks) to minimize impacts on natural and cultural resources.

The following objectives support the goal of resource preservation:

- Coordinate and integrate trail design with natural and cultural resource planning
- Upgrade or remove informal social trails

- Protect and enhance natural resources
- Protect and enhance cultural resources

### **Contribute to a Comprehensive Transportation Strategy**

Another plan goal is to promote alternative forms of transportation and discourage private automobile travel within and to the Presidio. An attractive, well-functioning trail system that provides convenient connections between housing and work areas and is coordinated with transit and shuttle stops can increase use of alternative transportation modes. Additionally, trails and bikeways will connect to regional trails, such as the California Coastal Trail, the Bay Area Ridge Trail, the San Francisco Bay Trail, and the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail. Providing both loop trails and through trails should encourage pedestrian and bicycle use.

The following objectives support the goal of contributing to a comprehensive transportation strategy:

- Establish a trails and bikeways network to make direct connections, link main activity and residential areas, and provide key connections to the City of San Francisco
- Promote recreational and commuter bicycle use to, through, and within the Presidio as an alternative to automobile use
- Provide a system of trailheads that includes bicycle and/or vehicle parking and corresponds to transit or shuttle stop locations
- Encourage alternative forms of transportation and facilitate and coordinate movement from one form of transportation to another, including buses, shuttles, bicycles and foot-traffic



Runners on the Golden Gate Promenade

### **Encourage Sustainable Design and Construction**

The Trails Plan is consistent with NPS and Trust goals for sustainability and environmental protection.

Prior planning recommendations call for park facilities, including trails and bikeways, to be designed, constructed, retrofitted and operated to minimize adverse effects on natural and cultural resources and to be reflective of their environmental setting.

NPS defines sustainability as the capability of natural and cultural systems to maintain themselves over time (NPS 1993). Many factors affect trail sustainability, including management policies, design, construction techniques and maintenance. The following objectives support sustainability:

- Minimize disturbance during and after construction
- Design trails for durability, erosion control and minimal environmental impact
- Use sustainable and renewable materials for trail construction, including both recycled and recyclable materials from the Presidio
- Design low-maintenance trails and coordinate trails and bikeways upkeep with a viable, high-quality maintenance program
- Consider re-use of disturbed areas for trail alignments such as along existing roads and social trails

### **Promote Ongoing Public Involvement through Volunteer Stewardship**

The final Trails Plan goal is to develop long-term partnerships with community groups, schools, park neighbors, and other trail users.

Public participation provides opportunities for education and community involvement and may include funding, building and maintaining trails, and monitoring their long-term use. Any long-term trail monitoring and maintenance strategy will require collaboration with visitors, neighbors and volunteers.

To promote stewardship activities, key objectives include:

- Foster volunteer programs and other partnerships
- Promote interagency cooperation and volunteer coordination
- Create training and educational opportunities